

The Amateur in You, Part 2

What have you been pondering?



You get what you pay for...really?

In a Quora post, I was asked which I thought was the better HT, the Yaesu FT-60R or the Baofeng UV-5R. I believe this came about as a result of my defense of the Baofeng on a Facebook Group thread. The poster was a new ham who was considering his first HT purchase, and sincerely wanted to know. Here's my long-drawn-out answer.

Is an apple comparable to an orange? They're both edible fruit, taste good, relatively inexpensive, and easy to acquire. Is the Chevrolet Cruze comparable to more expensive cars, like the Toyota Corolla? Well, yes and no. If you're a student on a budget, and really need a car, the Chevy might be the way to go. Furthermore, the features in the Cruze might rival those of the Corolla. On one hand, parts and repair costs of the Corolla might be somewhat higher than those of the Cruze. Then again, the Cruze has a somewhat greater failure rate than (not quite as reliable as) the Corolla, costing you more. A case of "you get what you pay for"? Not necessarily.

In my opinion, the best way to examine this is to list pros and cons, then decide what's best for you (if a feature is listed under the Baofeng, it's implied that the same feature does not apply to the Yaesu, and vice versa.):

Baofeng UV-5R pros:

- 1/5 the price of the Yaesu
- Dual-watch (can receive two frequencies simultaneously) for any channel or frequency is easy to use
- Has a flashlight
- Can receive FM broadcast
- A little lighter than the Yaesu
- Can transmit on FRS, GMRS, and MURS during an emergency (the Yaesu must be MARS/CAP modified to work these)

- Can set two different CTCSS tones for encode and decode

Baofeng UV-5R cons:

- Has a very difficult and limited squelch control
- The "0" button is placed somewhat inconveniently
- Some options can only be programmed by computer

Yaesu FT-60R pros:

- Can receive 800 MHz (police, fire, EMS) transmissions
- Somewhat more durable than the Baofeng
- ARS (automatic repeater shift)
- Easy to program manually, especially with ARS
- ARTS (automatic range transponder system) for local "talk groups"
- Easy support from US distributors
- Supports WIRES
- Supports AM receive on some frequencies

Yaesu FT-60R cons:

- Too easy to accidentally enable WIRES

As a side note, some amateurs will point to spurious emissions by the Baofeng as a reason not to purchase them, but those problems also existed in Yaesu models, and today's versions of both have their spectral impurity issues resolved.

In the end, I highly recommend both, and I own varieties of both. So, are they comparable? Well, as much as are apples and oranges!

— Noji KNØJI

